



HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Peter T. King (R-NY) Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence

“Combating Transnational Gangs Through Information Sharing”

January 18, 2018

Remarks as Prepared

Law enforcement officers use many weapons to fight terrorism and crime on our streets. Some of these weapons, such as badges, guns, and squad cars, are easy to see. They are the hallmarks of police work. There are other weapons, however, that are harder to identify but every bit as vital. Among these less visible weapons, access to timely and accurate information is often times the difference between a successful investigation and an unsolved crime.

In today’s threat environment, much of the information needed by law enforcement in the U.S. is generated overseas. This is particularly true when it comes to combating complex Transnational Criminal Organizations that threaten our safety at home. These sophisticated criminal enterprises do not stop at borders. Instead, they extend beyond the limits imposed by nation states and threaten the peace and stability of multiple countries. The only way to defeat syndicates that operate across international borders is through partnerships with foreign counterparts.

This issue is of particular concern to the people of Long Island. Specifically, the violent street gang MS-13, which has been designated as a TCO, has inflicted much death and destruction in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. The horrendous criminal actions of MS-13 disproportionately affect the youth of immigrant communities on Long Island. In the last 14 months, the murders of 17 people in Suffolk County alone have been linked to MS-13 violence. It is incumbent on U.S. law enforcement agencies to work with our overseas allies to ensure that coordinated enforcement efforts are brought to bear against the menace that MS-13 and other TCOs pose to our nation. In addition to information sharing, another essential step in the fight against TCOs is to develop the capacity of our foreign partners to defeat these networks before they become a threat to the U.S.

Today’s hearing will feature testimony from representatives of federal agencies tasked with combating the spread of TCOs. These entities bring various tools and capabilities to the fight, including investigating and prosecuting TCOs as well as working with our foreign counterparts to strengthen and support their efforts to disrupt and dismantle TCOs. These witnesses include executives from the Federal Bureau of Investigation from the Department of Justice, Homeland Security Investigations from the Department of Homeland Security, and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs from the Department of State. All of these agencies participate in protecting the U.S. homeland by working to defeat TCOs overseas. Each of these agencies is responsible for collecting, vetting, and disseminating TCO related information. Sharing this overseas information with state and local domestic law enforcement

agencies enhances the ability of our men and women in blue to keep this country safe at home from the threat posed by TCOs.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses. Their understanding and vast experiences will provide the Committee with a comprehensive overview of how the cycle of international information sharing functions. This overview will, in turn, afford the Committee an opportunity to identify enhancements that can be made to better equip U.S. law enforcement at all levels to share information in their efforts to disrupt and dismantle TCOs both at home and abroad.

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